

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LONDON 06268 01 OF 02 181800Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----181807Z 125928 /43

P R 181751Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2765
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 06268

EXDIS
AMBASSADOR PICKERING SENDS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR JO SY XF
SUBJECT: CROWN PRINCE HASSAN'S DAMASCUS VISIT --
SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT ASSAD TOLD CROWN PRINCE HASSAN THAT HE FAVORS A UNITY PROCESS THAT PRESERVES SYRIAN AND JORDANIAN SOVEREIGNTY. FOR DOMESTIC AND INTER-ARAB REASONS, ASSAD PREFERS AN EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF SYRIAN-JORDANIAN UNITY PLANS. ARAFAT TOLD ASSAD THE SOVIETS WANT THE PLO AT GENEVA (WHEN AND HOW NOT CLEAR) AND THAT PLO MUST RECOGNIZE ISRAEL. END SUMMARY

2. MORNING APRIL 17 CROWN PRINCE HASSAN PROVIDED ME WITH A BRIEFING ON HIS RECENT VISIT TO SYRIA. HE RAN OVER WITH ME THE NOTES ON HIS TALKS WHICH HE USED TO BRIEF KING HUSSEIN. HE SAW PRESIDENT ASSAD ALONE ON TWO OCCASIONS FOR SEVERAL HOURS EACH TIME. THIS CABLE COVERS MAJOR POINTS HE PASSED ON TO ME ON SYRIAN-JORDANIAN RELATIONS AND OTHER SUBJECTS OF AREA INTEREST. SOUTH LEBANON COVERED SEPTTEL.

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3. PRESIDENT ASSAD, HASSAN CONCLUDED, WAS MORE FRANK WITH HIM IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS THAN WITH KHADDAM AND OTHERS PRESENT. HASSAN CONCLUDES FROM HIS VISIT THAT SYRIA IS A MAZE OF SEPARATE INTELLIGENCE AND SECURITY ORGANIZATIONS WHOSE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IS DEPLORABLY BAD. HE ALSO BELIEVES THAT ASSAD IS UNDER CONTINUING FINANCIAL AND DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE, BUT HE DID

NOT GIVE ME DETAILS ON THESE POINTS.

4. ON SYRIAN-JORDANIAN UNITY, ASSAD TOLD HASSAN HE ACCEPTED KING HUSSEIN'S POINT THAT WHATEVER OCCURRED SHOULD NOT CAUSE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE SOVEREIGNTY OF EACH OF THE STATES. ASSAD SAID THAT THE TWO NEEDED TO DO SOMETHING MORE THAN AT PRESENT. THE END RESULT HAD TO BE SOMETHING GREATER THAN THE LIAISON BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM AND LESS THAN FULL UNITY. DOMESTIC PRESURES AND INTER-ARAB REASONS, ASSAD CLAIMED, WERE STILL IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE UNITY TALKS - JORDAN AND SYRIA WERE STILL SOMEWHAT ISOLATED IN THE ARAB WORLD. IF JORDAN DID NOT WANT TO GO AS FAR AS SYRIA DID, THAT FACT WOULD NOT AFFECT THE BASIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO, ACCORDING TO ASSAD.

5. HASSAN SAID ASSAD CLEARLY WOULD LIKE AN EARLY ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE UNITY TALKS TOGETHER WITH TIMETABLES.

6. HASSAN TOLD ASSAD THAT HE SAW THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP AS BASICALLY ONE BETWEEN THE ALAWITES AND THE HASH-EMITES AND THAT THIS FACT WOULD CONTINUE TO BE TRUE FOR THE PROBLEMS HE HAD WITH SOME OF HIS DOMESTIC GROUPS IN CONTINUING THE UNITY PROCESS. HASSAN ALSO TOLD ASSAD THAT BOTH LEADERS HAD RECEIVED FROM THEIR ADVISORS A FORMULA FOR FUTURE UNITY (A CONFEDERATION PRESERVING BOTH SOVEREIGNTIES) AND THAT THIS FORMULA COULD BE ANNOUNCED AT ANY TIME BOTH LEADERS AGREED TO DO SO. ASSAD WAS
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FRANK IN HIS RECOGNITION THAT SAUDI ARABIA, THE SOVIET UNION, THE UNITED STATES, EGYPT AND SOME OF THE OTHER ARABS ALL OPPOSED THE UNIFICATION EFFORTS FOR SEPARATE REASONS. ASSAD MADE THE POINT THAT IT WOULD HELP TO CRYSTALLIZE THE PROCESS TOWARD UNIFICATION IF A CONCRETE ANNOUNCEMENT WERE MADE AND IT MIGHT ALSO END THE UNCERTAINTY AND CONFUSION ON THE PART OF OTHERS.

7. HASSAN SAID HE SUGGESTED TO ASSAD THAT THE LEBANON ALSO BE CONSIDERED IN CONNECTION WITH EFFORTS TOWARD UNITY AND THAT ASSAD CLEARLY GAVE IT SECOND PRIORITY.

8. ON ANOTHER SUBJECT, ASSAD GAVE HASSAN A BRIEFING ON ARAFAT'S RECENT MOSCOW VISIT. ARAFAT WAS PLEASED BY THE

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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 LONDON 06268

EXDIS

MADE TWO BASIC POINTS TO ARAFAT: (A) PLO SHOULD BE PRESENT AT GENEVA (HASSAN NOTED THAT REPORT DID NOT INDICATE THAT SOVIET SAID HOW OR WHEN THEY SHOULD BE PRESENT), AND (B) THAT PLO MUST RECOGNIZE ISRAEL'S RIGHT TO EXIST.

9. ARAFAT ALSO REPORTED THAT SOVIETS ARE STILL EXTREMELY NEGATIVE ON EGYPT AND SADAT, BUT SPOKE VERY POSITIVELY ABOUT SYRIA. IN CONTRAST, ARAFAT REPORTED HE WAS ASKED BY THE SOVIETS TO PLAY AN INTERMEDIARY ROLE BETWEEN THEM AND EGYPT IN AN EFFORT TO BRING THE TWO BACK TOGETHER. ARAFAT INDICATED HE DID NOT HAVE MUCH INFLUENCE IN EGYPT BUT WOULD TRY. ASSAD SAID HE HAD NOT BEEN ASKED BY EGYPT TO TALK ON ITS BEHALF WITH THE SOVIETS. HOWEVER, HASSAN TOLD ME THAT MUBRAK, WHO VISITED AMMAN AFTER DAMASCUS AND AFTER HASSAN'S DEPARTURE FROM SYRIA, TOLD JORDANIANS THAT HE BROUGHT A REQUEST TO ASSAD TO ATTEMPT A MEDIATING ROLE BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE SOVIETS. ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIANS, ASSAD AGREED TO DO THIS WHILE IN MOSCOW.

10. ASSAD IS STILL DISTURBED BY THE LACK OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM THE SAUDIS AND OTHER OIL STATES.

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11. ON THE RED SEA CONFERENCE, ASSAD SAID SADAT AND NUMEIRY BELIEVE THAT LIBYA CONTINUES TO POSE A DANGER

TO EGYPT AND THE SUDAN. THEY ARE NOW PARTICULARLY WOR-
RIED THAT INCREASING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA WILL
INCREASE THE THREAT. SYRIA BELIEVES IT IS BETTER TO
HELP THE ERITREAN MOVEMENT NOW AND KEEP IT UNDER ARAB
INFLUENCE RATHER THAN TO HAVE THE POSSIBILITY OF MARX-
IST ETHIOPIANS AND THEIR SOVIET SUPPORTERS ENTIRELY
DOMINATING THE AREA IN THE FUTURE.

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